

FROM THE

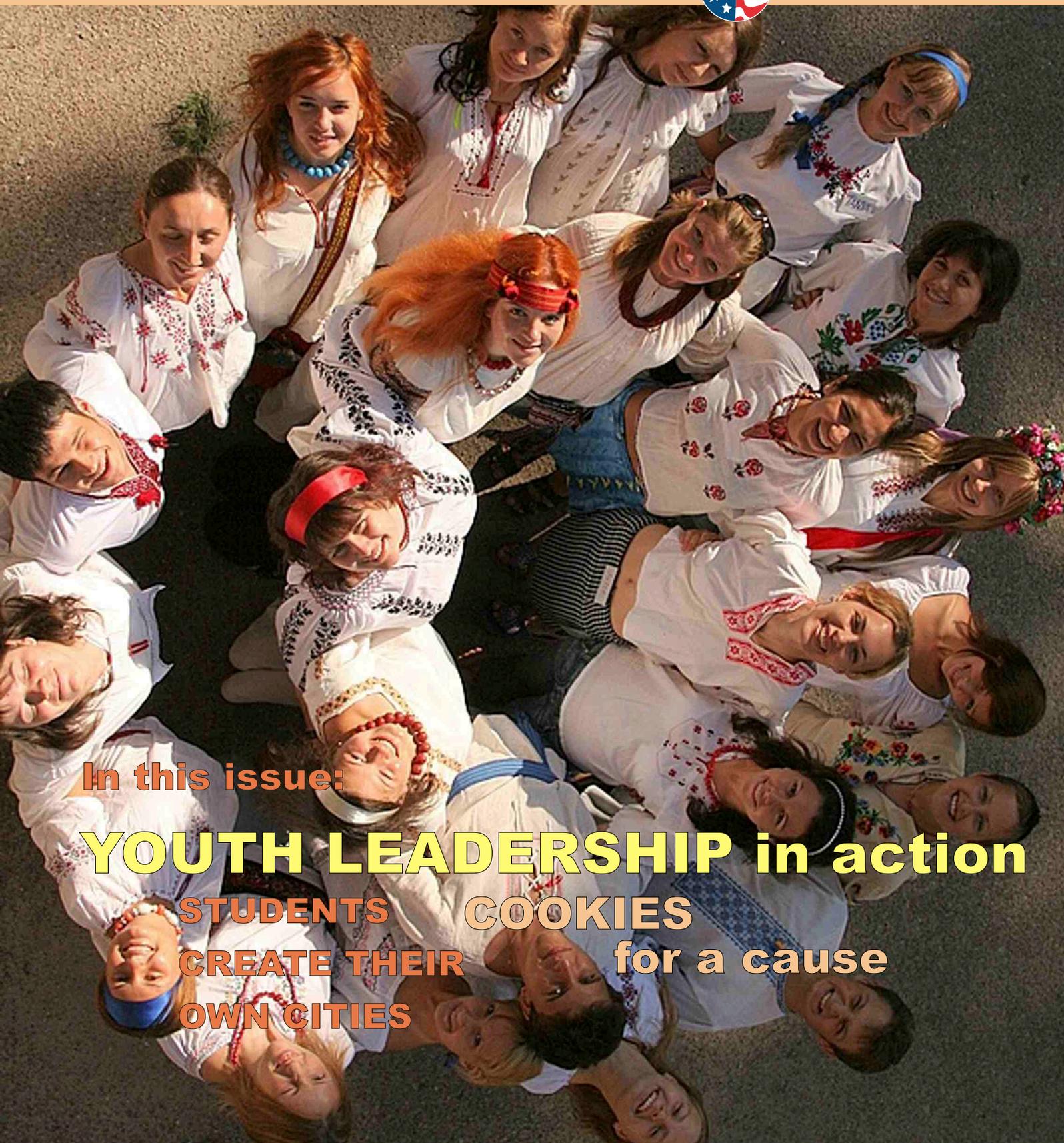
# FIELD

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B I M O N T H L Y N E W S L E T T E R



US Peace Corps in Ukraine



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## YOUTH LEADERSHIP in action

STUDENTS COOKIES

CREATE THEIR for a cause

OWN CITIES

# Students Create their **OWN CITIES**

In July 2006 over 120 children and youth ages 8-20 years old and 14 Ukrainian volunteers participated in three one-week English language camps in the Ivano-Frankivsk oblast of Ukraine. Amy Burgardt, Andrea Donnelly and Kavita Pullapilly in cooperation with their Ukrainian counterparts organized and led the camps which were located in the village of Turka and the city of Kolomiya.

What was so special about these camps? Ukraine is a budding market economy and these camps used the simulation program, "Our City", created by previous Peace Corps Volunteers. This program teaches the concepts of entrepreneurship, leadership, and civic society in an interactive and fun way.

Over the course of the week, campers learned about how a city works and built their own. They proposed and voted for their city's name, held election campaigns for mayoral candidates, created and voted for their laws, applied for jobs, developed business plans, made advertisements, produced and marketed their own products and services, and built their city's infrastructure (roads, fountains, parks, etc.).

Each camp had from 9 to 15 businesses, which were created and run by the campers. Campers brought animals for the zoo, made sandwiches for a pizzeria, gave manicures and styled hair at the hairdresser, made jewelry for the shops and interviewed "Our City" citizens for the newspaper and radio station. There was no limit to their creativity and enthusiasm.

On the last day of each camp, the campers opened their "City" to the public. Over 200 guests came; they purchased products and services offered by the campers' businesses. These guests included parents, teachers as well as local businessmen, government officials and print/television media from Turka and Kolomiya.

Two major successes came from the camp. One, the campers left with a better understanding of English and two, learned about how they could be active participants in their communities. At least 65% of the campers have signed up for additional English Clubs and camps at the Kolomiya Youth Center in the fall. In addition, Kolomiya's Department of Education is looking to use the "Our City" program in their English classes.



**Shining with success:** Volunteers Andrea Donnelly, Kavita Pullapilly and Amy Burgardt

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**Sell, Sell, Sell!:** The City of Dreams at work



**Baking:** Olya is preparing for a fundraiser



# COOKIES for a Cause

Young student volunteers walked through the Sunday market with a mission. Blue bandanas with the words of their youth group written on them, “Make the World Different,” adorning their heads or tied around their arms. One of the volunteers, Marina, carried a tray of frosted chocolate cupcakes decorated with M&Ms that grabbed the attention of many as the small group made their way to the table that would serve as their workspace for the day. It was a little after 8 in the morning; the bazaar was already bustling with people. The girls began setting up their table, decorating it with blue and yellow streamers, donation jars, posters, and rows of cookies, cupcakes, peanut brittle, and brownies. A crowd of people gathered during setup, unable to suppress their curiosity, questioning what the youth were doing, asking the prices of the baked goods, nudging their way into a position where they could read the posters and look at the tasty treats on the table. Once the preparation was completed their day of fundraising began.

One thing was for sure, no one walked by without glancing in the direction of the brightly decorated table. “Fresh cookies made with love! Buy yours today, support our dream, your youth!” Olya sang out to the people passing by. The girls are empowered, people are asking questions about who they are and what they are doing. They are receiving approval in the process. “I am really enjoying myself,” proclaimed Katia, “it is interesting to sell cookies and talk with people about our project.”

When the last item was sold, a small sampler box of goods, the girls cheered. Workers at the produce stands around them shouted out congratulations. In all, they raised \$50.00 for their cause.

“When are we doing it again?” asked Tanya. It was a huge success.

Just as quickly as the group of youth wearing blue bandanas arrived, they departed, full of energy and feeling proud of themselves. This is a feeling of success that can only come after hard work. “I didn't think we would be able to sell everything, but we did! I didn't believe people would think our project was interesting, or our cookies tasty.” Marina said thoughtfully, her eyes alive with excitement. “I want to do this again and again!” chimed in Olya.

This was their first fundraising attempt. They had a dream: to open a youth café, run for youth and by youth with adult collaboration. With the encouragement and support of Peace Corps Volunteers, Julie Ota and Katherine Tyler, a small yet strong group of Hadiach youth have been working to raise awareness and gain support for their dream. Their summer's hard work had paid off. They have a space for their café and the support of the local government. The group also has been invited to speak with a local youth committee for the first time in the committee's history. Meanwhile, a Peace Corps Small Projects Assistance grant is in the works. However they understand they need more youth, more money, and to register their organization officially.

As the new school year begins and summer comes to a close, the youth are moving into the next stage of work. Fundraising will continue allowing for the renovation of their space to begin. A mural competition has been organized, also management and employment training has been scheduled. The youth have learned hard work pays off and people will listen to them if they present reasonable solutions to an area of concern. The memories of all their hard work, successes, lessons learned and fun along the way has empowered them to contribute to their community and thus, bringing the entire town of Hadiach closer together.



**No cookies:** the bottles are filled with money now

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**Selling:** bringing community closer together



# Youth CAN's Camp Rah-Rah a Huge Success



■ **Speak up:** Leadership class

THE GOAL IS  
TO PROMOTE  
CIVIL SOCIETY  
DEVELOPMENT  
BY INCREASING  
YOUTH  
PARTICIPATION  
IN CIVIC  
ACTIVITIES AND  
GRASS-ROOTS  
COMMUNITY  
PROBLEM  
SOLVING.

■ **Caught in the games:** Learning  
American football



**A**ugust 15th, 2006 - Around 4 on a warm summer's afternoon, two buses carrying no fewer than 90 civically active youth from all over Ukraine turned down the alleyway to the campsite in the Kupiansk region of Kharkiv. As they entered the camp gates they were met with a scene they could not have anticipated: 40 counselors (PCVs, Ukrainians, and two volunteers from Poland and Portugal), faces painted blue and yellow and armed with a plethora of noisemakers, water guns, and guitars, circling the buses yelling greetings, banging on the windows, and singing camp cheers. Thus the stage was set for yet another crazy and inspiring week at the Ukrainian NGO Youth CAN's renowned Camp Rah-Rah, also known as StartPoint.

The atmosphere of high energy and enthusiasm was channeled into the classroom. Throughout the week participants were trained in many relevant topics: leadership, civic responsibility, project design and management, critical thinking, journalism, gender Issues, diversity, debate, healthy lifestyles and sports. The classes, combined with practical team challenges, hands-on learning opportunities, and tons of fun, were the perfect atmosphere for participants to get inspired to design and implement their own community projects once they returned home. In the past, participants' projects have varied from working with orphans to healthy lifestyles seminars to environmental clean-up campaigns and to raising human trafficking awareness.

Camp Rah-Rah (StartPoint), whose theme is "Changes start with YOU!" is the first step in Youth CAN's yearlong Youth Community Action Program (YCAP), which consists of five educational and motivational events and project work throughout the year. The goal is to promote civil society development by increasing youth participation in civic activities and grass-roots community problem solving. This year the program has gotten off to the right start, as one participant summed it up perfectly: "StartPoint means to me a beginning of hard and fun work for myself, my society, my country and my world"

In 1995, PCV Jodi M. Le Fort founded Camp Rah-Rah as an American Culture and Language retreat. In 2004, it was registered as a NGO and currently is administered by Ukrainians. Since 1995, more than 2500 youth from all oblasts of Ukraine have been involved in YCAN projects.



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BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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